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# MAXIMUM SECURITY

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## The AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

#24

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MACKIE
ROMITA JR
GREEN

STAN LEE PRESENTS:

# THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN!

I WANT YOU TO TAKE JILL TO SAFETY NOW!

THE RANGER AND I WILL HANDLE WARD AND THESE CREATURES... WHATEVER THEY ARE!

NO, ARTHUR, YOU TAKE YOUR DAUGHTER AND GET OUT OF HERE FAST.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THESE THINGS ARE THAT WARD HAS BACKING HIM UP, OR WHAT IS GOING ON WITH HIM, BUT...

...THEY LOOK MORE MY SPEED!

GENTLEMEN!

THERE IS NO NEED TO QUARREL AMONGST YOURSELVES.

MY ALIEN FRIENDS, THE Z'NOX, AND I ARE GOING TO GET AROUND TO TAKING CARE OF YOU ALL.

THE REAL FUN IS JUST BEGINNING. FOR YOU... AND FOR THIS WORLD.

THE WEB-SPINNER HAS KEPT TABS ON HIS FRIEND INVESTIGATOR ARTHUR STACY, WHO HAD SEARCHED FOR SENATOR STEWART WARD -- WITH THE INTENT TO KILL HIM, CLAIMING WARD WAS THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN ALIVE.

NOW, SPIDEY STANDS WITH STACY, HIS DAUGHTER JILL AND ARTHUR'S COMPANION, THE MYSTERIOUS RANGER, AS THE MUTATED FIGURE OF WARD APPEARS, FLANKED BY INHUMAN ENTITIES IN HIS SERVICE.

THAT'S THE ROLLICKIN' RECAP. AND AWAAAAY WE GO...

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THE

# DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN FROM NEW YORK

PART THREE

## FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION

mackieromitaelliottgreenwrightcomicraftmacchioquesada

IS *THIS* THE BEST YOU AND THE RANGER HAVE TO OFFER, ARTHUR?

I WOULD HAVE EXPECTED, WITH ALL THESE YEARS OF PREPARATION AND OBSESSION, YOU COULD HAVE COME UP WITH *SOMETHING* MORE EFFECTIVE.

TAKE *HIM*, MY FRIENDS.

LEAVE THE OTHERS... KILL THEM... INFECT THEM... I DON'T CARE. BUT ARTHUR COMES WITH US.

PLEASE, SPIDER-MAN! GET JILL OUT OF HERE *NOW!*

NO! DADDY! I WANT TO STAY WITH YOU --!

YOUR FATHER'S RIGHT. WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE QUICK.

I'LL HELP HIM AND —

ARRGH! BACK... BURNING!

UGPH!

CRAK

ARTHUR!

WOMP

COME ALONG, GENTLEMEN.

LET'S BEGIN IN EARNEST.

JILL, I'LL FIND HIM. I —

THIS IS *YOUR* FAULT!

YOU ARE *POISON* TO OUR FAMILY. FIRST UNCLE GEORGE AND THEN MY COUSIN GWEN...

FWAK

LEAVE US ALONE.

JUST LEAVE US ALONE.

I'M SORRY. YOU'RE WRONG. I JUST WANTED TO —

-- I'LL FIND HIM.

YOU CAN'T GO UP AGAINST WARD AND THOSE THINGS ALONE.

YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH. I *DO*.

AND *YOU* HAVE NO IDEA WHAT *I'M* DEALING WITH.

I'M *NOT* GOING TO LET A FRIEND DOWN... NOT AGAIN.

THWIP

NOT A MEMBER OF THE STACY FAMILY. JILL CAN'T BE RIGHT.

THWIP

*GWEN* WAS THE FIRST GREAT LOVE OF MY LIFE. AND MY GREATEST ENEMY, THE *GREEN GOBLIN*, KILLED HER.

I'VE *GOT* TO FIND ARTHUR.

I CAN'T ALLOW MYSELF TO POISON THE LIVES OF *EVERYONE* I COME IN CONTACT WITH.

SPIDER-SENSE IS GOING CRAZY.

THIS MUST BE THEM.

IT'S GOT TO BE --?

WHAT THE --?

THESE AREN'T THE CREATURES THAT WERE BACKING UP WARD! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

HAS THE WHOLE CITY TURNED INTO SOME FULL-SCALE FREAK SHOW?

OKAY... SO YOU'RE NOT HERE TO *TALK!*

Even our Mighty Marvel translator can't decrypt what the Badoon thugs are saying to our hapless hero. -- Hapless Ralf.

LET'S *DO* IT THEN!

WELL...? COME ON!

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

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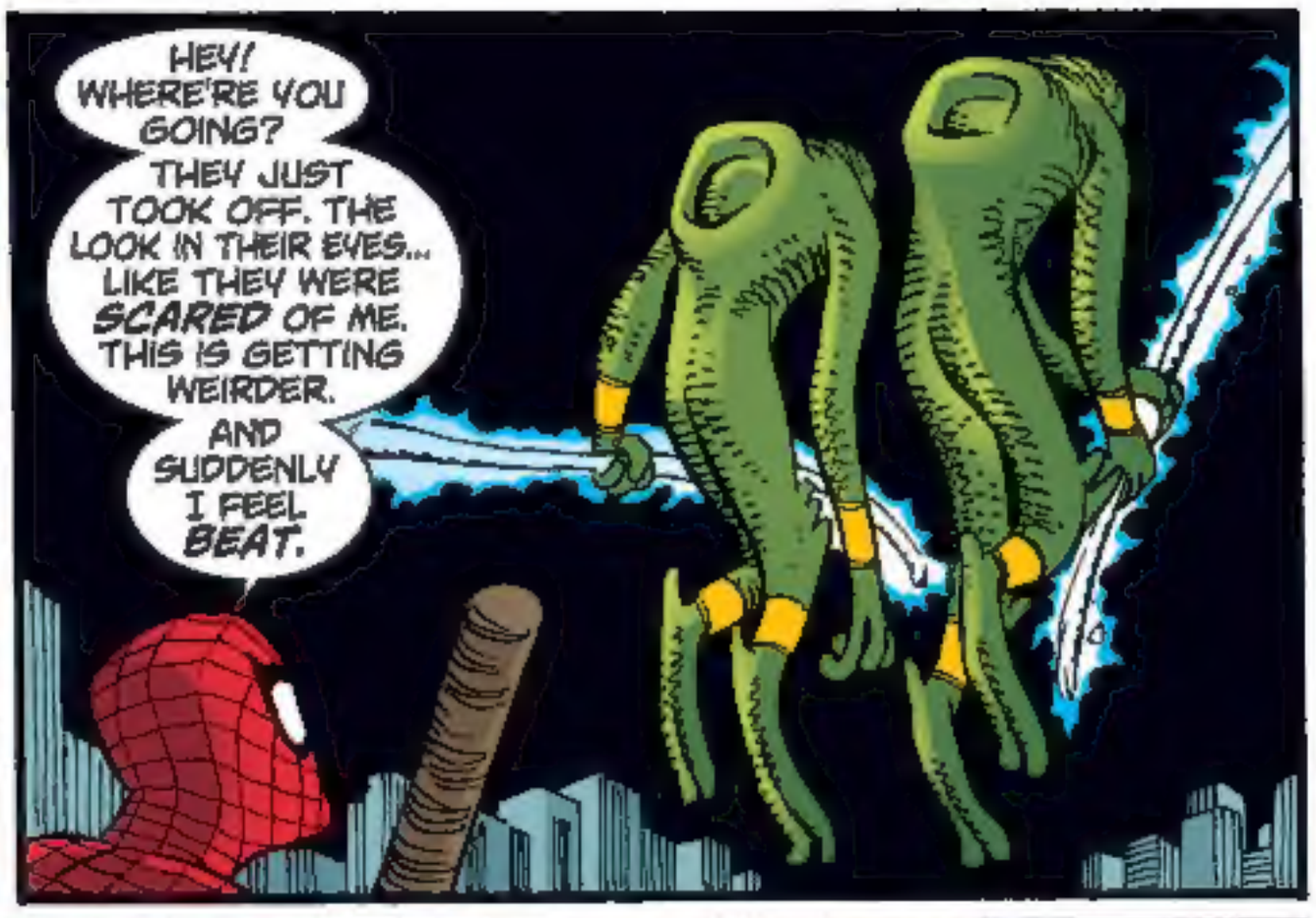
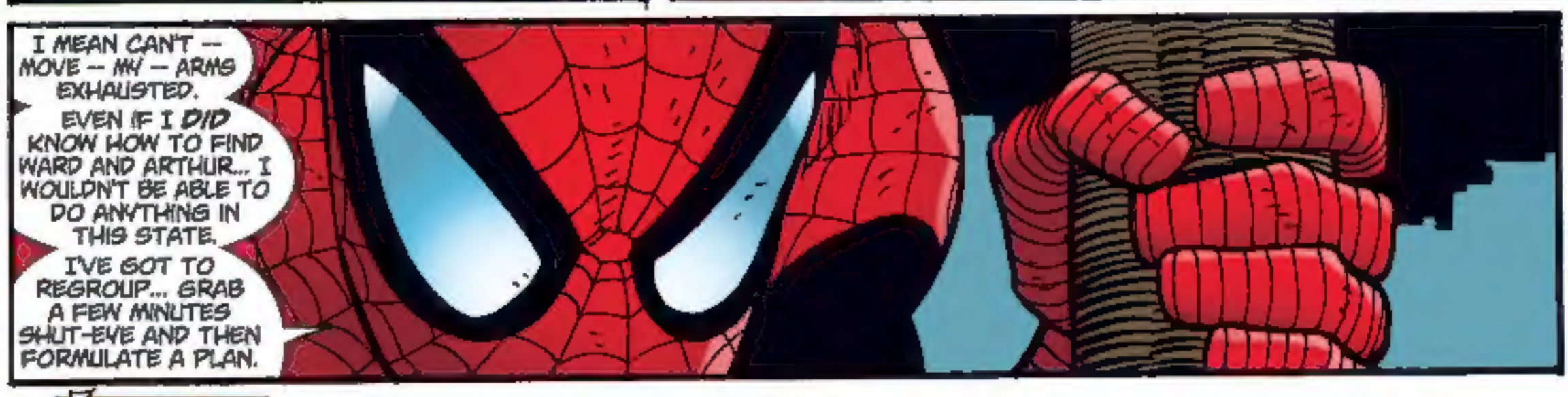
ᔑᓭ?-ᔑᒣᒣ ᔑᓂᓭ!


HEY! WHERE'RE YOU GOING?
THEY JUST TOOK OFF. THE LOOK IN THEIR EYES... LIKE THEY WERE SCARED OF ME. THIS IS GETTING WEIRDER.
AND SUDDENLY I FEEL BEAT.


I MEAN CAN'T -- MOVE -- MY -- ARMS EXHAUSTED.
EVEN IF I DID KNOW HOW TO FIND WARD AND ARTHUR... I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING IN THIS STATE.
I'VE GOT TO REGROUP... GRAB A FEW MINUTES SHUT-EYE AND THEN FORMULATE A PLAN.

LATER THAT NIGHT...
AT THE GATES OF AN OSBORN INDUSTRIES FACTORY...
...THE GRINNING GARGOYLE KNOWN AS THE GREEN GOBLIN ENGAGES IN BATTLE WITH ONE OF THE ALIEN RACE KNOWN AS THE AAKON.

...A GOBLIN WHO HANDLES HIS PUMPKIN BOMBS CLUMSILY AND WHO RIDES HIS GLIDER TENTATIVELY...
OSBORN

...GOBLIN KNOCKED EASILY FROM HIS PERCH.

FROM WHERE HAS HE SUDDENLY APPEARED?

WHY HAS NEW YORK CITY SUDDENLY BECOME A STOMPING GROUND FOR ALIEN SUPER-CRIMINALS?

AND WHEN WILL SPIDER-MAN FINALLY BECOME AWARE OF THE GOBLIN'S RETURN? *

* For answers to all these questions check out the SPIDER-MAN: REVENGE of the GREEN GOBLIN limited series and MAXIMUM SECURITY#1 for all the gory details.— Repulsive Ralf.

THE GREEN GOBLIN AND SOME SORT OF ALIEN-LOOKING DUDE? WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON HERE?

MY BROTHER-IN-LAW'S A COP IN MIDTOWN AND SAYS THIS KINDA CRAZY STUFF IS HAPPENING ALL OVER THE PLACE. NO ONE KNOWS *WHAT'S* GOING DOWN!

YEAH? WELL, I DON'T CARE!

THESE COSTUMED MOOKS AREN'T MESSING WITH THE PLANT ON *MY* WATCH.

LET'S TAKE 'EM OUT AND --

FRZZATT

MY *EYES!* I CAN'T *SEE!* I —

HA HA HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

LATER, IN THE DOWNTOWN APARTMENT PETER PARKER SHARES WITH RANDY ROBERTSON...

WHAT THE --?

HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN OUT?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON WITH ME THESE DAYS. I FALL ASLEEP AND FEEL WORSE WHEN I WAKE UP.

I'VE GOTTA GRAB SOME FOOD AND GET ON TO FINDING WARD AND ARTHUR.

HEY, PETE! WELCOME TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING.

HEARD YOU GNASHING AND THRASHING IN THERE AND THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO HAVE TO THROW A BUCKET OF WATER ON YOU.

THANKS FOR RESISTING, *RANDY*.

HEY, *GLORY*.

HI, PETER. YOU SHOULD SEE THIS.

YEAH! THERE'S SOME WEIRD STUFF GOING DOWN AROUND THIS CITY TONIGHT.

IT'S A HALLOWEEN THING... I'M TELLING YOU!

A BUILDING ON THE WEST SIDE WAS *MELTED!*

AND PEOPLE HAVE REPORTED SEEING ALL SORTS OF BIZARRE CREATURES AROUND TOWN...

...SOME END-OF-THE-WORLD NUTS ARE CALLING IT AN *ALIEN INVASION.*

FOX NEWS CHANNEL

MANHATTAN 27TH ST

N AVE

OH, YEAH?

OOH! CALM DOWN, PETER. YOU SEE THIS KIND OF STUFF EVERY DAY... DON'T YOU?

YOU OKAY? YOU LOOK WIPED OUT.

YEAH... I KNOW... MAYBE RANDY'S BEEN KEEPING ME UP TOO LATE AT NIGHT WITH HIS NON-STOP PARTIES.

GUILTY AS CHARGED!

WELL, I'M GOING TO HEAD UP TO THE BUGLE. THE PLACE HAS GOT TO BE IN OVERDRIVE RIGHT NOW WITH ALL THESE CRAZY REPORTS.

I AM *WITH* YOU, LADY OF MINE.

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE AN ALIEN UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL. READING ABOUT 'EM IN THE ENQUIRER JUST DOESN'T CUT IT.

PLUS... THINGS LIKE THIS MAKE YOU WANT TO BE NEAR FAMILY. I'LL CHECK IN WITH MY DAD. SEE YA, PETE!

YEAH... LATER.

MAN! MY BACK IS ITCHING LIKE CRAZY! MAYBE I'LL TAKE A SHOWER AND CHECK IN ON MY OWN FAMILY BEFORE I GO OUT LOOKING FOR WARD AGAIN.

COME *ON*, PETER... TIME TO GET INTO GEAR. BE THE HERO. SAVE SOME LIVES!

WHY AM I SO *LETHARGIC* THESE DAYS?

*SHORTLY, AT HIS AUNT'S HOME IN FOREST HILLS...*

ALL THIS *ALIEN* TALK IS A BUNCH OF HOOEY... IF YOU ASK ME!

JUST ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE PRANKS LIKE THE ONE ORSON WELLES DID ALL THOSE YEARS AGO ON HALLOWEEN. CAUSED QUITE A PANIC.

REALLY! WHAT PEOPLE WILL BELIEVE!

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT IS, PETER?

PETER?

MOM... DAD... UNCLE BEN... GWEN... HARRY... MARY JANE...

I'VE LOST SO MANY OF THEM.

IS IT ME?

WHAT'S THAT YOU HAVE THERE, DEAR?

JUST ONE OF MY OLD PHOTO ALBUMS.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, PETER.

AND I WANT YOU TO STOP THAT RIGHT NOW. DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME? THINGS HAPPEN FOR A REASON. *WE* DO NOT DETERMINE WHY.

YES, MA'AM.

I --

SOMEONE, OR SOME *THING*, OUTSIDE THE WINDOW.

AUNT MAY...

...I'VE GOT TO USE THE BATHROOM.

YOU KNOW WHERE IT IS, YOUNG MAN. NO NEED TO STAND ON FORMALITIES WITH *ME*.

AND MAKE SURE YOU PUT THE SEAT BACK DOWN!

YES, MA'AM!

THIS'LL GIVE ME A CHANCE TO SNEAK OUT A WINDOW AND...

...GET BEHIND WHATEVER IS LURKING OUT THERE.

YOU? *THE RANGER?*

HOW DID YOU...?

FIND YOU... SPIDER-MAN? I KNOW THINGS YOU CAN BARELY CONCEIVE.

WE *ALL* HAVE OUR SECRETS, BUT YOURS IS SAFE WITH ME.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I THOUGHT YOU COULD USE HELP IN TRACKING STEWART WARD AND ARTHUR DOWN.

*AND* I THOUGHT YOU NEEDED TO KNOW SOMETHING.

YOUR SKIN... HAS IT BEEN ITCHY LATELY?

SO...?

YOU'VE BEEN INFECTED... WE *BOTH* HAVE.

WARD DID IT.

IT'S WHY HE DIDN'T BOTHER WITH US. THE DAMAGE HAD ALREADY BEEN DONE.

OUR DEATH WARRANTS SIGNED.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? IT'S JUST A RASH. IT'S --

FAR MORE THAN THAT.

WE, AND EVERY SINGLE PERSON WE'VE COME IN CONTACT WITH SINCE WE FOUGHT WARD ARE DYING. INFECTED WITH AN ALIEN PATHOGEN.

THE INFECTION WILL SPREAD UNLESS WE CAN GET TO WARD AND CREATE AN ANTIDOTE.

YEARS AGO STACY, WARD AND I WERE COMMISSIONED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO RETRIEVE THE PATHOGEN WHEN IT FELL INTO THE HANDS OF AN INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST GROUP CALLED *HYDRA*.

INTELLIGENCE INDICATED THAT THE PATHOGEN MAY'VE BEEN DERIVED FROM THE TISSUES OF DEAD *EXTRATERRESTRIALS* HYDRA DISCOVERED.

ARTHUR *NEVER* BELIEVED THE BIO-TOXIN WAS OF ALIEN ORIGIN. BUT WARD'S EYES EERILY LIT UP WHENEVER THERE WAS TALK OF THE ALIENS.

WARD PRETENDED TO BE ONBOARD FOR THE MISSION, BUT AS SOON AS WE'D REACHED THE PATHOGEN, HE STOLE A VIAL OF IT AND RAN. IN A GUNFIRE EXCHANGE, WE BELIEVED WARD WAS KILLED.

WE WERE WRONG.

MY AUNT...

...RANDY... GLORY...

ALL INFECTED BY YOU, BUT THEY PROBABLY WOULD HAVE GOTTEN IT SOONER OR LATER. IT APPEARS TO BE PART OF WARD'S PLAN.

I WANT TO HEAR IT ALL FROM THE BEGINNING.

I WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING *YOU* KNOW ABOUT WARD

"FINE, BUT WE'VE GOT TO KEEP MOVING.

"IT'S NOT JUST ARTHUR'S LIFE AT RISK NOW."

BUGLE

"IT APPEARS THAT THE PATHOGEN IS AIRBORNE.

"RAPIDLY SPREADING FROM PERSON TO PERSON UNTIL, SOON...

"...THE ENTIRE WORLD WILL BE INFECTED.

"THE DEATH TOLL WILL BE INCREDIBLE. THE BLACK DEATH WILL PALE IN COMPARISON.

"ALL THESE YEARS TRACKING WARD DOWN, WATCHING HIS POLITICAL RISE, AND I NEVER IMAGINED THAT *THIS* WAS HIS PLAN.

"DIDN'T THINK *ANYONE*... NOT EVEN *HIM*... WOULD BE CAPABLE OF SUCH RUTHLESSNESS."

"BUT WHY? WHAT DOES HE STAND TO GAIN FROM THIS?"

"WHY? BECAUSE IT WILL GIVE HIM WHAT HE HAS ALWAYS CRAVED... *POWER*.

"I'M SURE HE HAS A CURE ALREADY IN HIS HANDS.

"AND, AS THE SOLE SOURCE OF SUCH AN ANTIGEN, NATIONS WILL HAVE TO BOW AND DO HIS BIDDING.

"ARTHUR AND I SHOULD HAVE *KILLED* HIM WHEN WE HAD THE CHANCE ALL THOSE YEARS AGO, ON OUR ESPIONAGE MISSION IN EUROPE. *

"*YOU* SHOULD HAVE DONE IT WHEN ARTHUR ASKED YOU TO, SPIDER-MAN."

"IT'S THE ONLY THING THE MAN HAS EVER WANTED. THE ALIEN BEING WHO CONTACTED WARD CHOSE HIS SUBJECT WELL. WARD WOULD BETRAY EVEN THE HUMAN RACE FOR POWER.

* See Last Issue. — Recallin' Ralf.

"BUT I DIDN'T, RANGER, AND YOU'RE JUMPING AHEAD. I NEED TO HEAR IT ALL, FROM THE BEGINNING. NOW."

ONE HOUR LATER ON MANHATTAN'S EAST SIDE...

THE UNITED NATIONS!

WARD AND HIS ALIEN Z'NOX FRIENDS HAVE THEIR BASE OF OPERATIONS LOCATED IN A SUB-BASEMENT DIRECTLY ACROSS THE STREET FROM IT.

FROM WHAT BETTER PLACE TO SHOW THE WORLD THE MIGHT HE WIELDS THAN HERE?

BUT IF WARD WAS INFECTED BY THIS PATHOGEN ALL THOSE YEARS AGO... HOW COME HE DIDN'T DIE?

AND, IF S.H.I.E.L.D * HAD HIM IN QUARANTINE, HOW DID HE ESCAPE?

THE MAN YOU KNOW AS STEWART WARD WAS A TRAINED GOVERNMENT AGENT. S.H.I.E.L.D UNDERESTIMATED HIM. THAT'S NOT EVEN HIS REAL NAME.

AND THE REMAINING Z'NOX SAW TO HIS SURVIVAL... BELIEVING THE PATHOGEN WAS ACTUALLY SAFER IN WARD'S BODY.

* Strategic Hazard Intervention Espionage Logistics Directorate, the world's premier spy agency -- R.A.L.F.

THE PATHOGEN WAS ORIGINALLY DEVELOPED BY THE Z'NOX AS A FAILSAFE DEVICE TO DESTROY THE EARTH IF THEIR INITIAL INVASION FAILED. HYDRA MERELY MODIFIED IT.

WHAT NO ONE KNEW WAS THAT *ONE* OF THE Z'NOX HAD SURVIVED THE EXPLOSION OF THEIR SHIP AFTER THE X-MEN THWARTED THEIR ATTEMPTED INVASION OF EARTH. *

WARD WAS CONTACTED BY THAT Z'NOX AND OFFERED THE ONLY THING THAT EVER APPEALED TO HIM.. *POWER!* MILLIONS... BILLIONS OF LIVES MEANT NOTHING TO HIM... AS LONG AS HE WAS GIVEN THAT GIFT.

* Way back in X-MEN #65, Vol. 1-- Ralf-thuselah.

THAT WORKED TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE Z'NOX AS WELL.

BUT WHAT DOES HE WANT WITH ARTHUR?

WARD BELIEVES ARTHUR'S GUNSHOT BROKE THE VIAL AND INFECTED HIM. BUT THE Z'NOX DID IT. IT WANTED A HOST FOR THE BIO-TOXIN.

EVERYTHING WARD HAS DONE LATELY... HIS CONTACTING DOCTOR OCTOPUS, THE WIZARD... IT WAS ALL IN AN EFFORT TO FIND A WAY TO GET THE PATHOGEN OUT OF HIS BODY AND INTO SOME OTHER CARRYING HOST. AND THE Z'NOX DIDN'T OBJECT AS LONG AS WARD REMAINED LOYAL.

I BELIEVE THE ARRIVAL OF THE *SECOND* Z'NOX -- AS PART OF WHATEVER CRAZINESS IS HAPPENING TODAY -- PROVIDED WARD WITH THE MEANS TO THAT END.

AND WHAT BETTER HOST COULD WARD IMAGINE THAN THE MAN HE HAS BLAMED FOR HIS PREDICAMENT ALL ALONG... ARTHUR STACY.

PLUS... I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING MORE... SOMETHING PERSONAL BETWEEN THEM. ARTHUR NEVER TOLD ME.

IT REALLY DOESN'T MATTER BECAUSE WE'VE GOT TO STOP HIM.

YOU HAVE AN UNCANNY KNACK FOR STATING THE OBVIOUS, SPIDER-MAN.

THANKS. I WORK AT IT

LOOKS LIKE WE'RE HERE. READY... SET... GO --!

ARTHUR!
RANGER, BACK ME UP. I'M GETTING HIM OUT OF THERE!
NO, SPIDER-MAN... FREEING ME IS THE *LEAST* IMPORTANT THING RIGHT NOW.
YOU'VE GOT TO FIND WARD AND GET THE ANTIDOTE... OR WE ARE *ALL* GOING TO DIE, ANYWAY.
YEAH... RIGHT, ARTHUR. I WILL... *AFTER* I GET YOU LOOSE FROM THIS STUFF.
OOLPH! THIS STUFF IS LIKE STEEL! RANGER, I'M GOING TO NEED A HAND UP HERE!
ARTHUR *IS* SPEAKING THE TRUTH, SPIDER-MAN. WE *ARE* ALL GOING TO DIE.
FREE HIM... DON'T FREE HIM... HIS FATE REMAINS THE SAME.
EXCELLENT. NICE TO SEE THAT WE ARE ALL REASONABLE MEN... SO TO SPEAK.
YOU'RE *NOT* GOING TO GET AWAY WITH THIS, WARD.
BUT I ALREADY HAVE.
MY Z'NOX ALLIES HAVE PROVIDED THE NECESSARY KEY TO *UNLEASH* THE PATHOGEN WHICH HAS BEEN TRAPPED IN MY BODY FOR SO LONG.
AND SALVATION CAME WHEN AN ALIEN COMMISSION IMPRISONED TWO Z'NOX SCIENTISTS ON THIS PLANET ALONG WITH A HORDE OF OTHER ALIEN CRIMINALS.
NOT MUCH OF A POLITICIAN, ARE YOU, WARD? NOT VERY PERSUASIVE IF YOU COULDN'T EVEN ENLIST THE AID OF CRIMINALS AND MADMEN IN THIS SCHEME OF YOURS!
AND I DOUBT SINCERELY WHETHER THESE CREATURES WITH YOU ARE ACTUALLY ALIENS. MORE THAN LIKELY THEY'RE MUTATED HUMANS BRED BY HYDRA.

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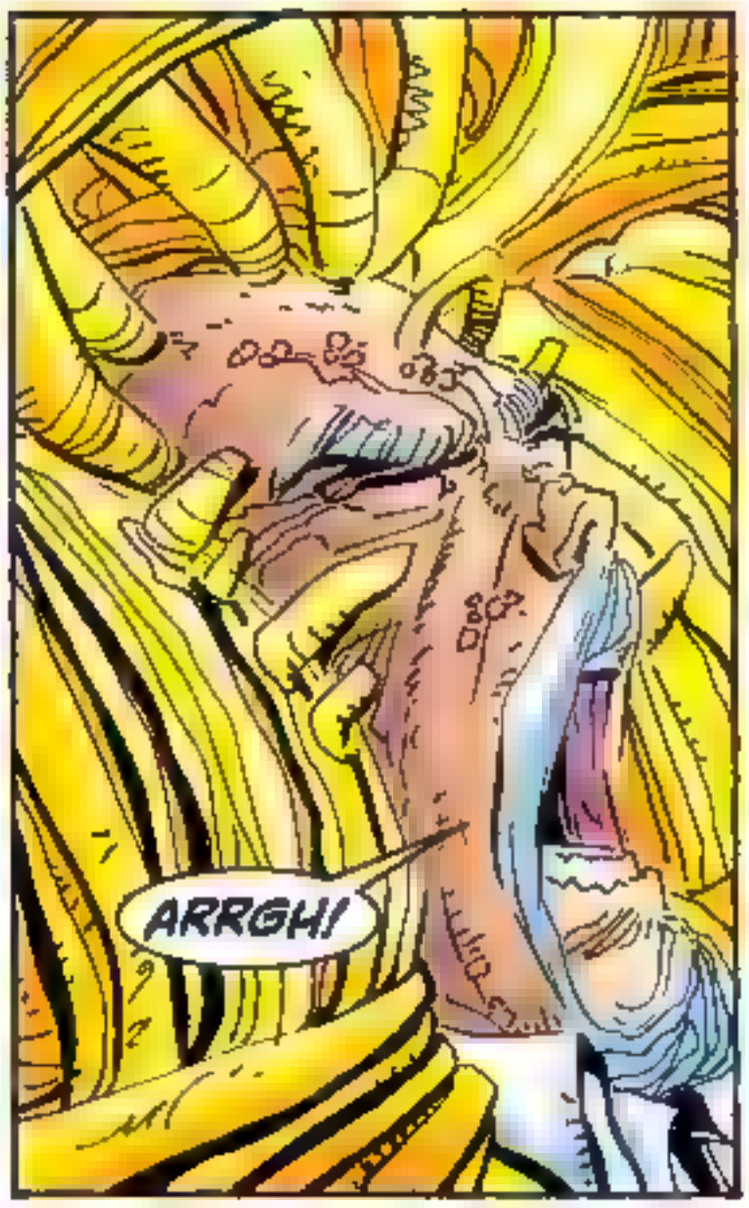
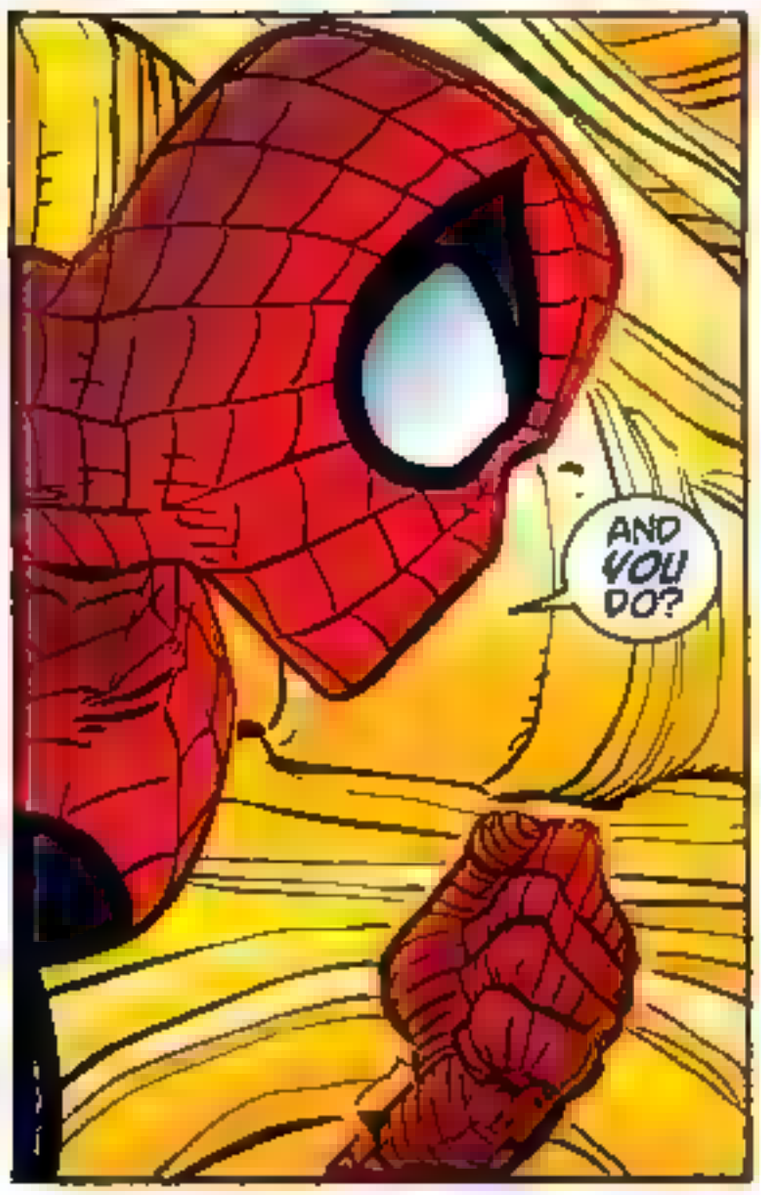
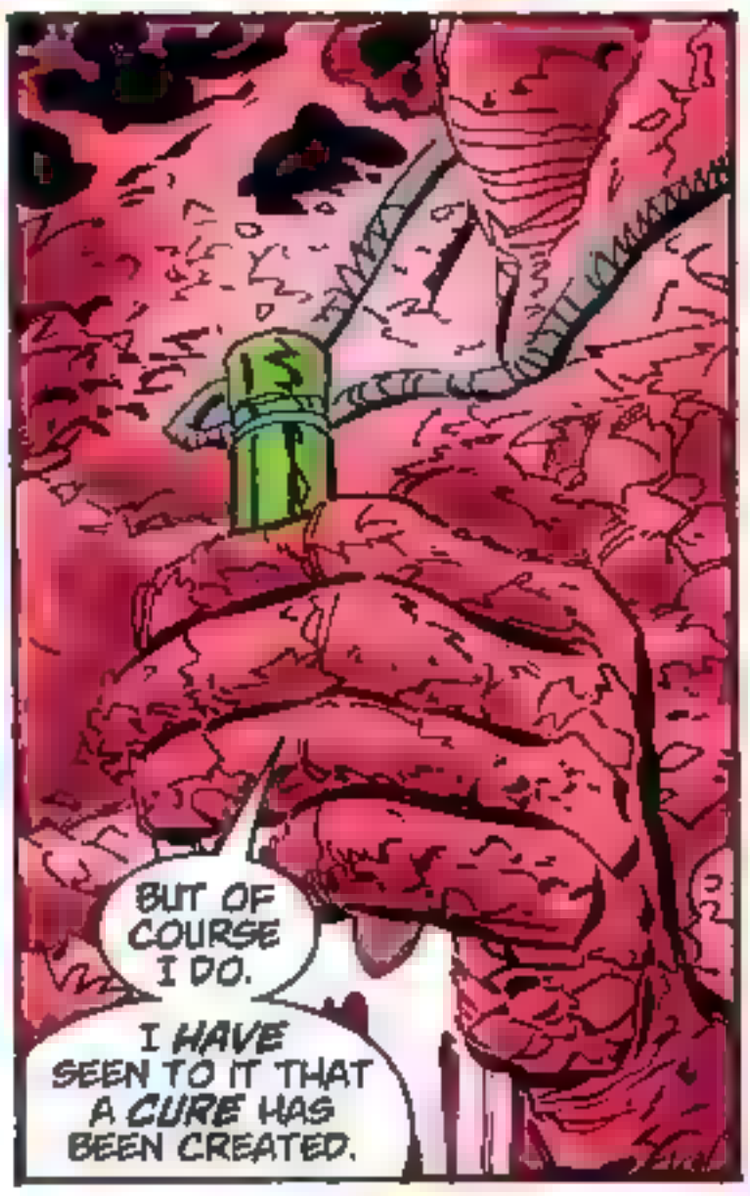
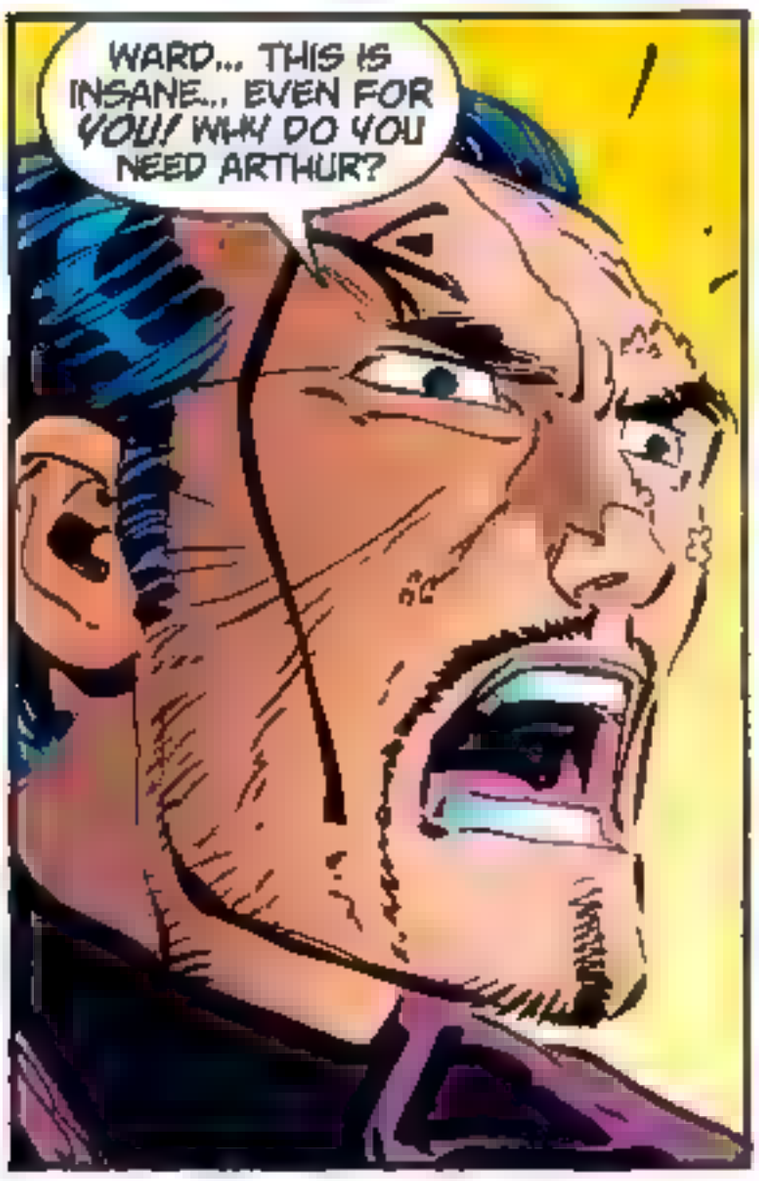

ARRGH!

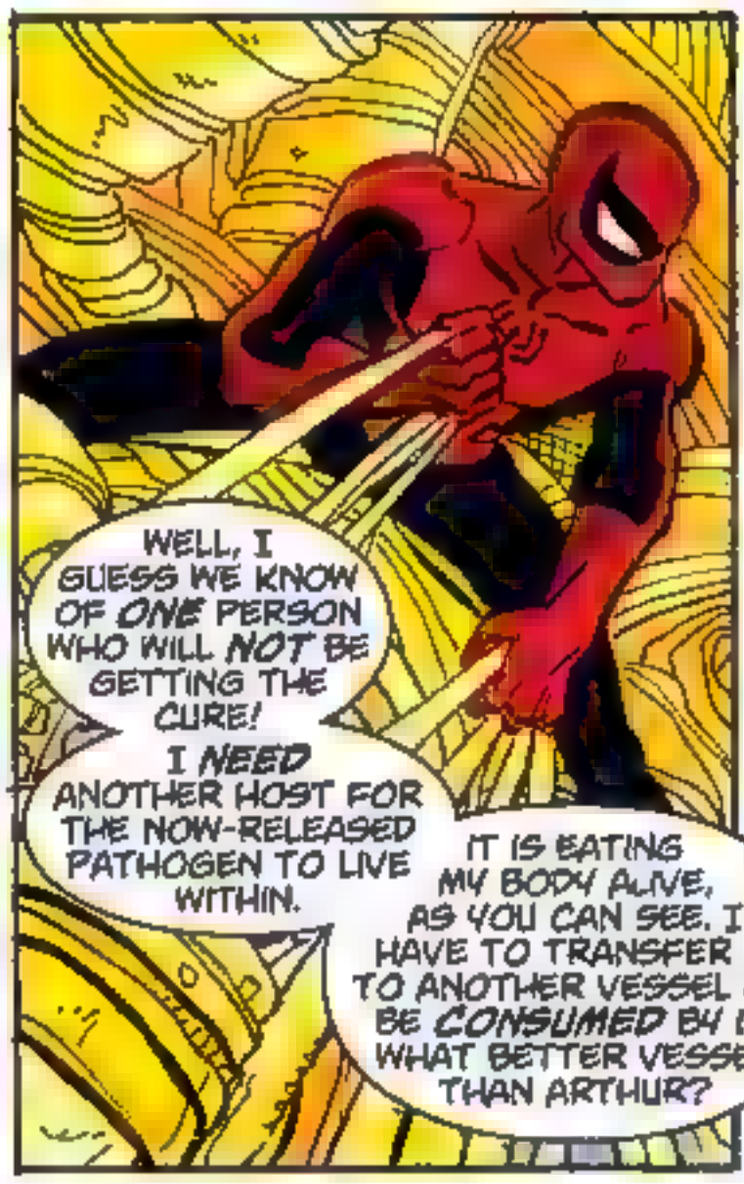
I WOULDN'T ANTAGONIZE THEM, ARTHUR. THEY HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO CONCERN FOR THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE.

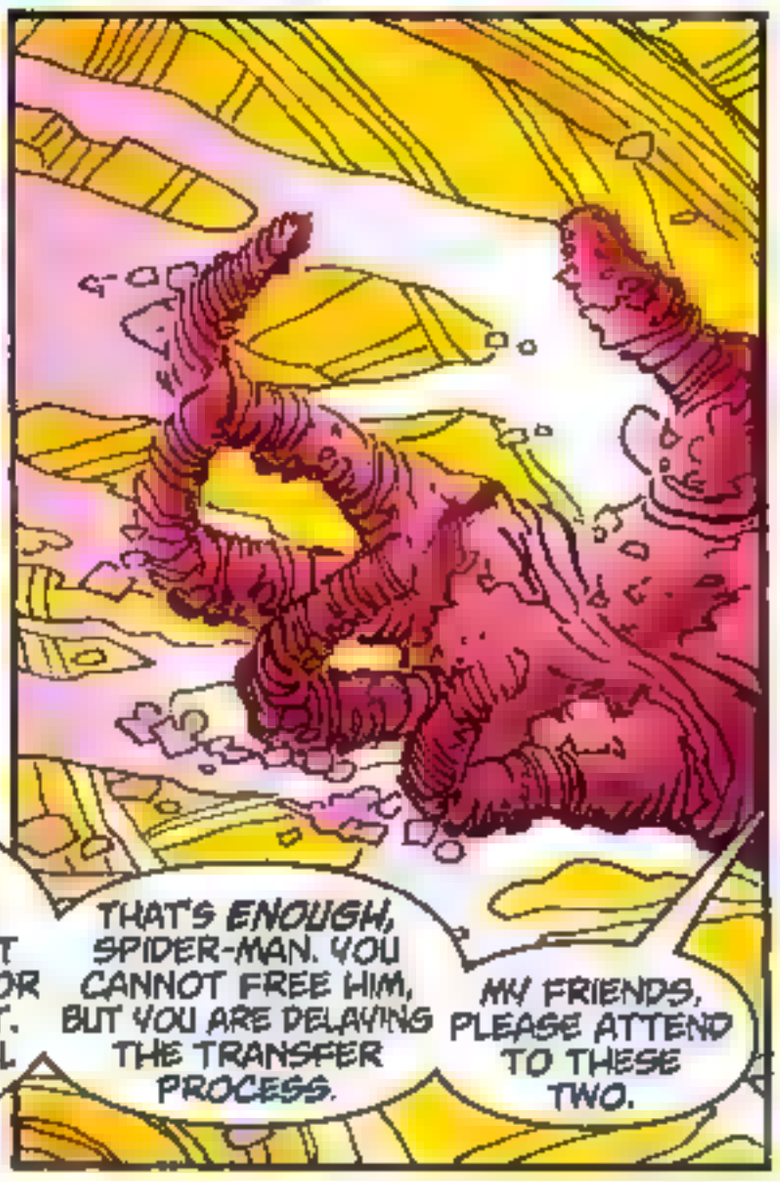

AND YOU DO?


BUT OF COURSE I DO.
I HAVE SEEN TO IT THAT A CURE HAS BEEN CREATED.

BUT IT COMES WITH A PRICE, RIGHT?
OF COURSE.


WARD... THIS IS INSANE... EVEN FOR YOU! WHY DO YOU NEED ARTHUR?


WELL, I GUESS WE KNOW OF ONE PERSON WHO WILL NOT BE GETTING THE CURE!
I NEED ANOTHER HOST FOR THE NOW-RELEASED PATHOGEN TO LIVE WITHIN.
IT IS EATING MY BODY ALIVE, AS YOU CAN SEE. I HAVE TO TRANSFER IT TO ANOTHER VESSEL OR BE CONSUMED BY IT. WHAT BETTER VESSEL THAN ARTHUR?


THAT'S ENOUGH, SPIDER-MAN. YOU CANNOT FREE HIM, BUT YOU ARE DELAYING THE TRANSFER PROCESS.
MY FRIENDS, PLEASE ATTEND TO THESE TWO.

IT'S ALMOST OVER NOW, ARTHUR.

THIS MACHINE YOU ARE CONNECTED TO IS FILLED WITH A PURE FORM OF THE PATHOGEN.

MY ALIEN COMRADES HAVE INFORMED ME THAT ONCE I PUMP YOUR BODY FULL OF IT, THE PATHOGEN IN *MY* BODY WILL BE DRAWN TO IT LIKE A MOTH TO A FLAME.

PERHAPS, NOW THAT THE RANGER AND SPIDER-MAN ARE HERE, I WILL AVAIL *MYSELF* OF *THEM* AS WELL.

ALL THREE OF YOU WILL THEN BECOME WALKING PATHOGENIC BOMBS.

THE Z'NOX WILL DEPOSIT YOU ALL IN THE MIDST OF TOMORROW'S UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING AND...

...*THEN* THE REAL FUN BEGINS.

YOU TRULY *ARE* PATHETIC, WARD.

ALL THOSE YEARS ON THE RUN, HIDING YOUR SECRET, PLANNING AND PLOTTING...

...AND IT COMES DOWN TO SOMEONE ELSE ARRIVING AND GIVING YOU THE ANSWER... SOMEONE ELSE HAS TO *GIVE* YOU THE POWER! THAT'S THE WAY IT'S *ALWAYS* BEEN.

IT ONLY MATTERS THAT I *HAVE* IT, ARTHUR.

JUST LIKE YOU, WARD. YOU COULD *NEVER* DO ANYTHING ON YOUR OWN. I ALWAYS COVERED FOR YOU ON *EVERY* MISSION. *ON* THE FIELD AND *OFF!*

EVEN *JEAN* KNEW IT.

IT'S WHY YOU COULD NEVER WIN HER OVER NO MATTER *HOW* HARD YOU TRIED.

DON'T.

WAIT A MINUTE! *THAT'S* WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT... ISN'T IT?

YOU'RE STILL MAD THAT JEAN MARRIED *ME* AND NOT YOU! HA HA HA!

YOU ARE EVEN MORE *PATHETIC* THAN I THOUGHT!

THAT'S IT, ARTHUR, KEEP HIM TALKING.

DISTRACT HIM.

MAKE HIM *MAD!*

SHE *SHOULD* HAVE BEEN MINE!

RANGER! THESE THINGS *CAN* BE HURT! THIS ONE'S GOING DOWN FROM THE CHARGE!

JUST *HOLD* ON! I'LL BE THERE!

YOUR *CHILDREN* SHOULD HAVE BEEN MINE!

YOU *POISONED* JEAN'S MIND AGAINST ME! I WAS TWICE THE MAN YOU *EVER* WERE!

YES, STEWART, LOOK AT THE MAN YOU TURNED OUT TO BE.

I'M SURE JEAN WOULD HAVE BEEN *SO* IMPRESSED.

GO AHEAD, STEWART, DO IT.

ONCE AGAIN YOU NEED *ME* TO FINISH WHAT *YOU* CAN'T! WHAT *YOU* AREN'T MAN ENOUGH TO DO!

YOU THINK I *NEED* YOU? I *NEVER* NEEDED YOU, ARTHUR! *NEVER!*

SPIDER-MAN, WHAT IS ARTHUR DOING?

BUYING US TIME TO FINISH UP WITH *THESE* THINGS.

NOW LET'S HURRY UP AND GET HIM *OUT* OF THERE!

STEWART, TELL ME SOMETHING *BEFORE* YOU KILL ME?

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF *YOU* WERE PUMPED FULL OF THE *PURE* VERSION OF THE PATHOGEN?

I DON'T KNOW.

THEN...

...WHY DON'T WE FIND OUT TOGETHER?

NO!

WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE?* WHAT HAVE YOU DOOONE?!

I... I... FEEL -- STRANGE.

AS OPPOSED TO BEFORE?

SPIDER-MAN, WE'VE GOT TO HURRY.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO WARD, BUT...

...HE *IS* CARRYING THE ONLY KNOWN ANTIDOTE TO THIS PATHOGEN WHICH IS ALREADY SPREADING LIKE WILDFIRE AROUND THE CITY.

THAT'S RIGHT, ARTHUR! I DO HAVE THE CURE!

AND WITHOUT IT THIS ENTIRE PLANET CAN ROT!

BUT FIRST I WILL HAVE THE SATISFACTION OF...

...KILLING YOU!

WE HAVE TO GET TO THAT VIAL.

ALL OF THE PATHOGEN IS CONTAINED IN HIS BODY. IF THE ANTIDOTE WORKS... AND WE CAN INJECT IT *DIRECTLY* INTO WARD'S BLOODSTREAM...

FWAM

OKAY, ARTHUR, BIG UGLY MONSTER GUYS AND SAVING THE WORLD ARE MY BAILIWICK.

DID I FIT BAILIWICK INTO A CONVERSATION?

COOL!

OOH BOY!

THIS IS *NOT* GOING TO BE PRETTY!

GOT IT, BUT...

I COULD USE A *HAND* HERE!

I'M *HERE*, SPIDER-MAN!

BUT YOU'RE ONLY GOING TO GET ONE CHANCE!

WHAT ARTHUR HAS IN MIND *SHOULD* WORK, BUT *ONLY* IF YOU CAN GET IT DIRECTLY INTO A MAJOR ARTERY.

IT SHOULD TURN WARD INTO A SUPER-CHARGED ANTIBODY MANUFACTURING MECHANISM AND --

YEAH, YEAH... AND SAVE THE WORLD.

NOW BE QUIET! I'M TRYING TO CONCENTRATE.

TELLING ME TO LOCATE A MAJOR ARTERY IS *EASY*...

...FINDING ONE ON THE OTHER HAND...

THERE!

SPLOOSH

YUCK!

NO!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME? I WILL KILL YOU ALL! TAKE YOU ALL OUT WITH ME!

GET ARTHUR OUT OF HERE... *NOW!*

I TOLD WARD YEARS AGO THAT IF HE *BETRAYED* US -- ONE DAY I WOULD *KILL* HIM!

BUT...

COME. IT'S TOO LATE TO SAVE *EITHER* OF THEM!

THE RANGER HAS LIVED THE BETTER PART OF HIS LIFE TRACKING WARD DOWN.

THERE IS NO WAY HE WOULD LEAVE WITHOUT SEEING THIS THROUGH TO THE END. THAT'S THE KIND OF MAN HE IS.

NOW *RUN*, SON, BECAUSE IT'S GOING TO...

# SPLASH

"THE MIST! THE *ANTIDOTE* CONTAINED IN WARD'S BODY!

"IT'S SEEPING UP THROUGH THE GROUND, SPIDER-MAN... WAFTING THROUGH THE AIR."

THEN I GUESS WE'RE --

*YES!* WE'RE SAVED. THAT MIST WILL SPREAD -- PENETRATE EVERY CORNER OF THE CITY AND SURROUNDING AREA... *CURING* EVERYONE IT TOUCHES OF THE BIO-TOXIN INFECTION.

AND AFTER THIS ORDEAL, THAT'S ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE ONCE-SENATOR... A SLOWLY DRIFTING FOG.

"WEB-SPINNER, THE WORLD WAS JUST SPARED A CATASTROPHE IT WAS BLISSFULLY UNAWARE OF. AND ALL BECAUSE OF THE INSANE AMBITIONS OF ONE MAN...

"...A MAN I ONCE WORKED WITH -- WHO I TRUSTED TO WATCH MY BACK -- BUT WHO SECRETLY SOUGHT THE GREATEST POWER IMAGINABLE.

"AND FOR A FEW SECONDS, STEWART WARD HELD THE FATE OF HUMANITY IN HIS CORRUPT HANDS. MY WORST *NIGHTMARE* WAS REALIZED. IMAGINE.

AND THE MOST IRONIC THING... THIS MAN WHOSE LIFE BECAME MY OBSESSION -- WHOSE LIFE I SOUGHT TO TAKE...

...YOU KNOW, I NEVER EVEN KNEW HIS REAL NAME.

END